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COMMITTEE ON RELATIONS WITH THE
HOST COUNTRY

LETTER DATED 8 OCTOBER 1996 FROM THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ON THE COMMITTEE ON RELATIONS WITH THE HOST COUNTRY ADDRESSED TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE

Enclosed please find the text of a note verbale dated 4 September 1996 from the United States Mission to the United Nations addressed to the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations, responding to the latter's note verbale dated 26 August 1996 (A/AC.154/292, annex) regarding the event of 17 August 1996 at the Northwest Airlines terminal at John F. Kennedy International Airport.

I kindly request that the text of the present letter and its annex be circulated as an official document of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country.

(Signed) Victor MARRERO

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ANNEX

Note verbale dated 4 September 1996 from the United States Mission to the United Nations addressed to the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations

The United States Mission to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations and refers to the latter's note verbale No. 661 of 26 August 1996 regarding the event of 17 August 1996 at the Northwest Airlines terminal at John F. Kennedy International Airport.

The United States Mission to the United Nations takes this opportunity to inform the Permanent Mission of Cuba that recent threats and actions by terrorist groups require heightened efforts by airline officials responsible for protecting the safety of air travellers. These procedures are designed to protect the security and safety of all persons who travel, including diplomats accredited to the United Nations in New York and their families.

The United States Mission to the United Nations regrets the inconvenience suffered by the Permanent Representative of Cuba on 17 August 1996 and has taken the necessary steps to avoid a repetition of the incident. Therefore, in the future, diplomats accredited to the United Nations and their family members who plan to travel from United States airports should carry their official United States Department of State identification cards with them for identification purposes at the airport.

In addition, the United States Mission to the United Nations wishes to inform the Permanent Mission of Cuba that diplomats and family members should expect that their luggage and their person will be subjected to normal security checks; for example, bags will be X-rayed and individuals will be expected to walk through the metal detectors. Moreover, an airline is within its right to decline to board a diplomat or family member who decline to voluntarily permit the search of their personal baggage or person.

The United States Mission to the United Nations again regrets that conditions are such that these procedures are necessary for the safety of air travellers and assumes that the Permanent Mission of Cuba understands that these measures are intended to ensure their safety as well as that of all other air travellers and will decide to cooperate with such operations in the future.